

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 002742

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, DS, S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/23/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS TRACKS KUWAITI JIHADIS

Classified By: CDA MATTHEW TUELLER; REASON 1.4 (B), (D)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: News dailies continue to report on the still-breaking story of widespread arrests of suspected Islamic extremists here. The reporting stream began with the July accounts of the repatriation of four Kuwaiti minors caught in Syria by local security forces on their way to join anti-coalition insurgents in Iraq. Based on interrogations of the four, press reports indicate between 10 and 20 suspected Islamic militants--most of whom are Kuwaiti--have been apprehended to date since the security sweeps began in late July. The widespread arrests brought reports of possible complicity between extremists and Islamist MPs and calls for re-educating jihadists and further GOK oversight of Friday sermons. END SUMMARY.

The Jihadis Who Started It All

¶2. (U) According to local media, the four Kuwaiti teens at the heart of the investigation remain in custody and reportedly gave Kuwaiti security services information regarding those who recruited them in Kuwait, arranged for their training, met them in Syria, and sent them to Iraq. Press reports indicate that this information led to the sweeps and arrests that began in late July and are currently ongoing. Early reports indicated that the youths got only as far as Syria, however, subsequent accounts say they made it to Fallujah where they were instructed and equipped to conduct suicide operations. Apparently lacking the stomach for such violent acts, one of the four reportedly called home and received family assistance which facilitated their return to Syria.

¶3. (U) The father of one of the four minors, Dhari Al-Zahameel, went public with his complaints telling one local daily, on July 19, that those who spread extremist ideas and recruit jihadists are well-known to state security. He further criticized those he called "air-conditioned jihadists,"--those who remained in Kuwait while sending others to do their fighting for them. Press sources claim the four were influenced to undertake jihad by the scenes from Abu Ghraib and the siege of Falluja and that such thoughts were planted through seminars, lessons, and Islamic audio and video tapes, which glorified suicide attacks and Mujahedeen adventures. The trip to Syria for all four was reportedly arranged in Kuwait with the help of Khaled Al-Dossari, currently a fugitive from Kuwait State Security, who press sources claim connected them with facilitators in Jahra, Kuwait, who in turn linked them with a contact named Abu Ali in Damascus.

Sweeps Net Suspects

¶4. (U) On 24 July, newspapers reported a widespread sweep of militants that netted 12 suspected extremists. The arrests took place in homes and mosques in rural Jahra and other unidentified areas. The suspects were reportedly found with small arms, RPGs, and surveillance information on US military convoys in the Doha and 7th ring road areas of Kuwait. Security services are reportedly still looking for the two suspected ringleaders: Ahmad Al-Mutairi and Khaled Al-Dossari.

¶5. (U) Reports indicated that the suspected jihadi facilitator Al-Dossari, who headed a committee dedicated to protecting the rights of prisoners, had been in contact with Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Dr. Abdullah Maatooq Al-Maatooq for two weeks prior to his attempted arrest. Other reports indicate he was arrested in Morocco several months ago, repatriated to Kuwait, and was released by Kuwait State Security at the behest of unknown Islamist MPs. One daily ran front-page photos of Al-Dossari laughing and talking with Islamist MPs Awad Barad Al-Enezi and Dr. Walid Al-Tabtabaei.

¶6. (U) More raids, primarily in the rural Western and Southern communities, were reported August 2-4 detailing the capture of five more suspects while four more suspects were added to the list of fugitives. Among those arrested is one identified as "M.A." who is believed to be Al-Dossari's right-hand man. Additional arrests on 8 and 9 August included the apprehension of a Saudi soldier, identified as "Shlash," who was detailed to the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry.

Another Kuwaiti identified as "A." was captured but his Iraqi partner reportedly escaped, however a large number of European passports were found in the house where the arrest took place. "Shlash," later identified as "Al-Dhufari" and another Kuwaiti, Ahmed Al-Otaibi, were released on 22 August on KD 300 bail.

17. (U) In early August, the public prosecution began referring some suspects to the courts and ordering others to be detained for longer periods. The suspects reportedly fall into two groups: minors, who are sent to Iraq to conduct suicide bombings and adults, recruited for more conventional attacks inside Kuwait. On August 14, three suspects charged with weapons possession and recruiting jihadis, Mohammed Al-Asfour, Mohammed Al-Harbi, and Motlaq Al-Ajmi, were released on KD 300 bail each. The four minors repatriated from Syria and four other adults were also recently referred to the public prosecutor's office.

Official Reaction

18. (U) At an 18 August conference on extremism, Awqaf Minister Al-Maatoog said that "extremism in Kuwait is minimal, and we are not underestimating it." Al-Maatoog further stated publicly that extremists are drawn to the ideology through the Internet and not through official Muslim clerics. The Awqaf Ministry also spoke against the preaching of extremism in Mosques and threatened to fire any preacher found promoting extremism. An official at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor reported that his office plans to re-educate those who have been influenced by extremist teachings. The plan includes lectures, seminars, and other awareness campaigns.

19. (C) COMMENT: Increasing editorial comment, near-daily press updates, and Embassy contacts indicate a growing extremist influence in mosques, schools, and Islamist youth outreach. Although the numbers of willing militants, recruiters, and complicit supporters are still unknown, the list of those involved grows publicly on the pages of the local dailies with each passing day. In spite of this, the Government appears unwilling to publicly acknowledge or meaningfully address this trend. The growing list of suspected extremists is mostly comprised of Kuwaitis from rural, tribal, and less affluent areas, which present a more fertile ground for militant recruiting and indoctrination.
TUELLER